

## APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

### 2013 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

**Legal Applicant:** City of Boston

**Application ID:** : 13AC147663

**Program Name:** Boston Promise Corps

For the purpose of enhancing our programs by improving the quality and quantity of applications to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), we are providing specific feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses of this application. These comments are not meant to represent a comprehensive assessment; rather the analysis represents those elements that had the greatest bearing on the rating of the application. Please note that this feedback consists of summary comments from more than one reviewer. For this reason, some of the comments may seem to be inconsistent or contradictory. Comments are not representative of all of the information used in the final funding decision.

#### Reviewers' Summary Comments:

- (+) Based on recent research, the applicant includes specific information that provides definitive support for the economic viability of the project relevant to the current economic needs of the target area.
- (+) In support of the need for the project, the applicant has identified a specific target community that has been defined by a low level of educational attainment where over one third of the population age 25 or over lacks a high school credential and 11% have a bachelor's degree or higher.
- (+) The application provides evidence that the Boston Public Schools need human capital to provide students with the tools needed to graduate and attend college, and successfully documents a compelling need for the proposed project.
- (+) Well-documented research is specifically cited showing the significant effect that highly qualified, effective teachers have on student achievement and learning; low-income students have less qualified teachers in the classroom.
- (+) The applicant indicates socioeconomic conditions reflective of 38% of the children in the targeted area living below the federal poverty line which supports the need in this area.
- (+) The applicant identifies the Dudley Street neighborhood located in an area identified as the "Circle of Promise" as an area with a high proportion of the city's most underperforming schools and disadvantaged communities.
- (+) The applicant has established two specific intervention strategies that are directly aligned with addressing the needs of the target population: providing academic interventions within the classroom and preparing Members to become committed classroom teachers for three years after service to the project.
- (+) The role of Members as outlined provides definitive support for involvement and engagement in preparing them to address the academic needs of project participants as well as supporting their needs in becoming highly trained and

effective classroom teachers.

(+) An ambitious plan is outlined which details how the proposal will utilize AmeriCorps members in the Boston Promise Corp, an initiative sanctioned by the Mayor and Governor to target and improve student academic outcomes in the Dudley neighborhood and close the achievement gap that exists among children who are impoverished, students of color, and students who are English Language Learners.

(+) The applicant clearly shows that existing resources will not be able to accomplish what the addition of dedicated AmeriCorps members will bring to the project.

(+) Based on research, the applicant has developed a professional development plan that supports teacher training which is in direct alignment with addressing the intended purposes of the project and the needs of participants.

(+) The applicant has identified specific measurements that will be employed to define the impact that pre-determined strategies have on student engagement. Each measure is commensurate with identified needs of participants.

(+) Specific expectations have been outlined relative to how participants will be licensed and assigned to specific schools following their participation in the project thereby providing highly effective teachers in high- need schools.

(+) The application uses evidence-based and evidence-informed interventions that have been proven to be effective to illustrate that the interventions proposed will work, increasing the number of Boston Public School students who graduate and become effective adults.

(-) The applicant does not provide specific supporting academic data related to key elements of the program which include academic engagement, attendance, homework completion, classroom participation, or school attitudes.

(-) The applicant fails to provide specific data that justifies the need to recruit and train teachers in the targeted schools. The narrative lacks any specific evidence or details that demonstrate the deficits of current teacher quality.

(-) The proposal does not show the correlation between poor student engagement and performance with the need to recruit teachers in hard-to-staff targeted schools.

(-) Specific details regarding the proposal's plan to monitor annual goals for both components of the program such as regularity and persons responsible for data collection and analysis are vague.